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DRAFT REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAMME MATTERS ON ITS IN-SESSIONAL MEETING HELD DURING THE FORTIETH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL, 1-18 JUNE 1993

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Addendum

CHAPTER III. COUNTRY, INTERCOUNTRY AND GLOBAL PROGRAMMES

B. Asia and the Pacific

1. The Assistant Administrator and Director, Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific (RBAP), introduced six country programmes and the Pacific multi-island programme, noting that with the exception of Afghanistan, Cambodia, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Myanmar, the country programmes for the region had all been presented to the Governing Council for the fifth cycle. He highlighted trends in the region in the areas of human development, poverty alleviation, HIV/AIDS, protection of the environment and ecosystems, economic reform and management, aid coordination and programme implementation. He traced developments in UNDP over 30 years, noting that UNDP was continuing to respond flexibly to change in order to maintain its leadership role in technical cooperation.

Republic of Korea

2. The Assistant Administrator and Director, RBAP, introduced the fifth country programme for the Republic of Korea (DP/CP/ROK/5) with a total indicative planning figure (IPF) of $4.6 million and estimated cost-sharing of $9 million. The resources were to be concentrated in five main areas: (a) environmental management; (b) industrial resources; (c) Tumen River Area development; (d) social development; and (e) technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC).

3. The Assistant Administrator stressed that the Republic of Korea had become a net contributor country and that the fifth country programme came at a time when the country's role as a recipient of external assistance had greatly diminished while its role as a donor country was yet to be fully defined. There was, therefore, a unique opportunity for the Government and UNDP to redefine the scope and modalities for joint collaboration and to shape a new, more relevant and meaningful role for UNDP in the country.

4. In that context, he noted that, notwithstanding its spectacular progress, the country still faced obstacles for the achievement of sustainable, balanced growth. Some of those obstacles had not received due attention in the accelerated drive for economic development, e.g., the environment, the needs of women and the disadvantaged, such as the handicapped, and labour relations. UNDP technical cooperation was therefore welcomed and appreciated, especially in the areas of concentration set down by the Governing Council.

5. Delegations commended the positive impact of the cooperation between the Republic of Korea and UNDP, noting in particular the environment programme and the application of "the polluter pays" principle. The country programme was found to be well balanced and in accordance with government priorities. The UNDP field office had played a positive and comprehensive role in aid coordination. Information was requested on the actual costs to UNDP of keeping a presence in the Republic of Korea, given its status as a net contributor country.

6. Several delegations inquired as to the status of the Tumen River Area Development Programme, given its potential impact on the country as well as the sizeable allocation made in the country programme in support of the activity.

7. The representative of the Republic of Korea thanked delegations for their positive and supportive remarks and stressed the interest of his Government in regional and subregional technical cooperation.

8. In his response, the Assistant Administrator highlighted the substantial shift in the orientation of technical cooperation as outlined in the country programme document. He confirmed that based on criteria that had been agreed to, the country, still qualified as a developing country and thus as an active partner in TCDC. The substantial financial contribution of the Government was stressed and in that connection the Assistant Administrator confirmed that, given its present level of contributions, UNDP would meet only the costs of the resident representative.

9. The Assistant Administrator outlined in brief the present status of the Tumen River Area Development Programme. He mentioned that by the end of 1993 it was expected that the participating countries would have signed legal agreements and that a charter for a Tumen River corporation would be agreed to. Pre-feasibility studies in such sectors as transport, infrastructure, natural resources and industry were progressing and environmental impact assessments and guiding principles were being integrated into the activities.

10. The Committee recommended that the Governing Council approve the fifth country programme for the Republic of Korea.

Mongolia

11. The Assistant Administrator and Director, RBAP, introduced the fifth country programme for Mongolia (DP/CP/MON/5) with a net IPF of $6.3 million and cost-sharing of $3.5 million. He emphasized the importance of national capacity-building for the management and implementation of economic reform policies and in addressing such adverse effects of reform as unemployment and increasing poverty. UNDP assistance under the fifth country programme would concentrate on four interrelated areas: economic performance management; management development; poverty alleviation; and environmental protection. The important role of UNDP in aid coordination, including assistance to the Government for the preparation and convening of the annual donor consultation meeting, was also highlighted.

12. The representative of Mongolia referred to the difficulties faced by Mongolia in dismantling the former socialist economic system and introducing a new market-oriented system. Concern was also expressed about rising unemployment, deterioration in living standards, emerging social problems and environmental degradation. The new country programme focused on a limited number of high-priority areas which were fully consistent with the national development agenda. He thanked UNDP and multilateral and bilateral donors for their support to the fifth country programme.

13. Other delegations noted the important role played by UNDP in aid coordination and in particular in convening the annual donor consultation meeting. One delegation indicated that his Government would make a cost-sharing contribution to the management development programme for Mongolia and would continue to work closely with UNDP; another noted the close cooperation between his Government and UNDP on macroeconomic advisory services. One delegation stated that his Government was working jointly with the World Bank in trying to address financial constraints faced by Mongolia in the transition period. The role of UNDP in human resources development, including management development, was supported. While endorsing the new country programme, the delegation indicated that it should be flexible enough to allow adjustments at a later stage. In view of Mongolia's limited capacity, he also emphasized the need for long-term experts and United Nations Volunteer (UNV) specialists. In reference to paragraph 27 (a) of document DP/CP/MON/5, one delegation cautioned against spreading the limited resources of UNDP too thinly.

14. The Assistant Administrator responded that while more long-term experts would be desirable, their relatively high cost was a constraint. UNDP had, however, already fielded a substantial number of UNV specialists in Mongolia. He clarified that UNDP would focus only on critical areas not covered by other donors.

15. The Committee recommended that the Governing Council approve the fifth country programme for Mongolia.